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SUPREME COURT ORDERS 33% QUOTA FOR WOMEN IN SC BAR ASSOCIATION

The court said the order must be implemented from the 2024 election to the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) set to be held on May 16

FIVE SEATS IN THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Apart from six office bearers, the SCBA has six senior executive members and nine executive members. As per the court order, at least two senior executive members and three executive members should be women. The order was passed by a bench comprising justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan while hearing a case involving SCBA against its former Secretary B D Kaushik | P9

AT LEAST 1 OFFICE BEARER SHOULD BE WOMAN

- One post of the office bearers of the SCBA should be reserved for women by turn and on rotation bases, the bench said in its order
- For the upcoming elections, the post of Treasurer shall be reserved for women, it said. However, this will not preclude eligible women members of SCBA from contesting for other office-bearer positions

May 19

WHEN RESULTS OF THE SUPREME COURT BAR ASSOCIATION ELECTION WILL BE OUT

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

LOOKOUT NOTICE AGAINST 'ABSCONDER' PRAJWAL

His father Revanna seeks anticipatory bail as rape charges invoked

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru/Kalaburagi

MORE trouble seems to be brewing for Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna and his MLA father HD Revanna in the alleged sex videos case as the Special Investigation Team (SIT) issued a lookout notice against Prajwal while a Hassan court allowed SIT to invoke rape charges against Revanna, who has moved a special court seeking anticipatory bail.

Further, another woman has filed a complaint of sexual harassment against Prajwal.

As Prajwal failed to appear before the investigation officer despite being served a notice, the SIT issued a lookout notice against him on Thursday, terming him an 'absconder'.

As per the lookout notice, law enforcement agencies have been requested to arrest him wherever he is sighted. The notice has been issued to all immigration points at airports, sea ports and also border checkposts.

Prajwal, who is said to be in Europe, on Wednesday sought a week's time to appear before the SIT through his advocate. It is said Prajwal has booked a return ticket to Bengaluru from Munich on May 15 and will be landing in the city in the wee hours of May 16. However, the MP is said to have flown to Dubai from Munich on Wednesday.

Continuing the probe, the SIT on Thursday recorded the statement of one of the victims before a magistrate under Section 164 of CrPC. The SIT has managed to identify some of the victims. But the investigators are not getting much cooperation from them. It is said that some victims have threatened to commit suicide if they are forced to give statements.

Besides, the investigation agency has also issued a notice to Naveen Gowda from Belur in Hassan district, who is accused of distributing pen drives containing videos and photographs of the MP with the victims. Poornachandra Tejaswi MG, a supporter of Prajwal, has filed a complaint against Gowda, who is said to be a close aide of a minister, in the Hassan CEN police station for circulating the videos on April 23. P4

Prajwal flew to Germany on diplomatic passport: MEA

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

SUSPENDED Janata Dal (Secular) MP Prajwal Revanna, who is in the eye of a storm over his alleged sexual harassment of women, travelled to Germany on a diplomatic passport without political clearance, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday.

"No political clearance was either sought from or issued by MEA in respect to his travel to Germany... Obviously, no visa note was issued either," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on Thursday.

Diplomatic passport holders can travel to over 100 countries, including Germany, without visa. "The ministry has not issued visa note for Revanna for travel to any other country," the MEA spokesperson said, adding that parliamentarians are entitled to have diplomatic passports. Prajwal is the sitting MP from Hassan, from where he is seeking re-election.

Diplomatic passports are issued to diplomats, government officials and individuals who are authorised to undertake official travel on behalf of the government. Under international law, diplomatic passport holders enjoy certain privileges and immunities, including immunity from arrest in the host country.

MODI SOUGHT VOTES FOR 'MASS RAPIST', SAYS RAHUL

Shivamogga: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi apologise to every woman of the country for seeking votes for NDA candidate Prajwal Revanna, whom he referred to as a "mass rapist". Rahul said, "It is not a sex scandal, but mass rape. On the stage, Modi supported the mass rapist. Modi told Karnataka that if the people vote for the mass rapist, it will help him." |P4

Nomination for Amethi, Rae Bareli ends today

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

WITH barely hours left for filing of nomination papers for the Amethi and Rae Bareli seats, the Congress is continuing to keep the suspense on whether Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka will contest from the prestigious seats.

Though there was no official word, sources said that Rahul is likely to enter the fray from Rae Bareli. That decision was taken after much deliberations within the party leadership. However, sources said Priyanka may not contest the general elections.

On Wednesday, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said the decision would be announced by Thursday evening. Yet, there was no official announcement till going to the press.

However, posters of Rahul have come up in both Amethi and Rae Bareli as the local leadership is hopeful that one of the Gandhis will contest from Amethi. "We received a message from the high command in the evening to make preparations for Friday's nomination. The party will also hold a rally today," said a leader.

According to sources, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge has conveyed to the Gandhis that not contesting from Uttar Pradesh would not augur well for the party's prospects in the Hindi heartland. Rahul represented Amethi for three straight terms from 2004 to 2019 before he was defeated by Union minister Smriti Irani by over 50,000 votes in 2019. Irani, who is seeking a second term from Amethi, has challenged Rahul to contest from the seat. A section of the leaders believe that if Rahul does not take up the challenge, it will only vindicate the BJP's charges of him running away from the seat.

According to sources, Rahul was not keen on Priyanka's electoral debut as he did not want all the three members of the family in Parliament. The BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have been constantly attacking the Congress over its dynasty politics.

Family bastion

Rae Bareli is prestigious for the Congress as it was held by Indira Gandhi thrice, her husband Feroze Gandhi twice and Sonia from 2004 to 2024

BJP drops tainted Brij Bhushan, fields his son Karan in Kaiserganj

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

THE BJP on Thursday dropped Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who faces criminal charges of sexually harassing women wrestlers during his stint as the president of Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), and instead fielded his younger son Karan Bhushan Singh from Uttar Pradesh's Kaiserganj Lok Sabha constituency.

Rajput card

By fielding Dinesh Singh and Karan Bhushan(pic), BJP hopes to placate Rajput community voters, who were upset with the party

The saffron party also named Dinesh Pratap Singh as its candidate from Rae Bareli, a Gandhi family bastion that elected Congress leader Sonia Gandhi five consecutive times. Dinesh Pratap Singh, currently serving as a minister in the Yogi Adityanath cabinet, was the BJP's candidate from the Rae Bareli parliamentary seat in 2019 as well. Even though he lost to Sonia Gandhi last time, he managed to bring down her victory margin to 1.67 lakh votes from 3.52 lakh in 2014. He was earlier with the Congress and he joined the BJP in 2018.

Brij Bhushan, the sitting MP in Kaiserganj, was forced to resign as WFI president over the sexual harassment scandal after the wrestlers launched a protest. By denying ticket to Brij Bhushan, the BJP has sought to send out a message of distancing itself from tainted leaders.

With Brij Bhushan, the total number of MPs benched by the BJP in UP in the ensuing election has touched 15. A six-time MP, Brij Bhushan has won not only from Kaiserganj but also neighbouring constituencies like Gonda and Balrampur. An influential regional leader, he has sway over half-a-dozen Lok Sabha seats in and around Gonda in central UP.

Brij Bhushan has formidable clout in Kaiserganj and adjoining districts as he owns over 50 educational institutions in the region. He had been pitching hard for a seat for himself while the BJP reportedly gave him two options — to field his wife Ketaki Singh or elder son Prateek, an MLA from Gonda Sadar. Ketaki Singh was BJP's Gonda MP in 1996.

EXPRESS READ

CBI not under control of Union: Centre tells SC

New Delhi: The CBI is not under the "control" of the Union and the government can't supervise either the registration of offence by the agency or its investigation, the Centre told the Supreme Court on Thursday. This came as opposition parties have been accusing the government of misusing central probe agencies.

Don't enrol voters for post-poll schemes: ECI

New Delhi: The Election Commission on Thursday issued an advisory to all national and state political parties to immediately cease and desist from any activities that involve registering people for post-election beneficiary-oriented schemes through advertisement, survey or mobile application |P7

Pak eager for 'shehzada' to be India's PM: Modi

Anand (Gujarat): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said Pakistan is eager to make the Congress 'shehzada' the next PM of India. His comments came amid reports that Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, a former minister in Pakistan, shared a video featuring Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on his social media |P7

India rebukes report on religious freedom

New Delhi: India has flayed the US Commission on International Religious Freedom report, saying it continues to publish propaganda on the country |P9

WITH THIS ISSUE
CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE INDULGE 36 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Light to moderate rainfall brought some temporary relief from the scorching heat for residents of Bengaluru on Thursday evening | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

B'luru sees dry April for the first time in 123 years

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

FOR the first time in 123 years, Bengaluru experienced a dry spell in April. But now after a gap of 159 days, parts of the city received light to moderate rain on Thursday.

According to India Meteorological Department (IMD) Bengaluru director N Puviarasan, from 1901 to 2024, it was the first time that the city IMD observatory recorded no rain in April. There were reports of light to moderate rain in parts of the city on Thursday evening. But IMD's observatories did not record any rain.

However, cloud formation and sudden change in weather conditions in the evening gave hope to Bengalureans of a respite from the scorching summer.

Puviarasan said some places in the city will receive rain due to local convection. However, thundershowers will occur after five days. Formation of Clumino-nimbus clouds and thundershowers happen due to local convection.

He said while there will be a respite from rising temperatures for south interior Karnataka, the heat wave alert will continue for north interior Karnataka. P2

BJP rushes to save Sikri fort from Kargil veteran's Hand

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

KNOWN for being the seat of the famous Sufi saint Salim Chishti and the fort of Mughal Emperor Akbar, Fatehpur Sikri is the youngest parliamentary constituency in Uttar Pradesh. It was carved out of Agra in 2008.

BJP's Rajkumar Chahar had won it in 2019 with a thumping five lakh-plus vote margin. But this time around, the contest seems to be evenly poised between the BJP and the Congress. Sikri goes to polls on May 7.

SHOWTIME FOR GLADIATORS

Congress candidate Ram Nath Sikarwar — popularly known as Fauji Baba — is giving a tough fight to Chahar, who is reeling under anti-incumbency besides intra-party rebellion.

In 2019, Chahar was a giant killer, having defeated Raj Babbar, the then state president of the Congress. But now Chahar, the national chairman of the BJP's Kisan Morcha, is caught in a double whammy.

Apart from Sikarwar, Chahar is also facing a tough challenge from Rameshwar Chaudhury, son of sitting BJP MLA Babulal Chaudhury. Rameshwar has raised the flag of revolt and is contesting as an independent. He is believed to have better clout than Chahar among the Jat voters. The BJP recently expelled Rameshwar after all efforts to pacify him failed.

Chahar also has to deal with grumpy Kashtriyas because of a perceived slight against the community by the BJP's candidate in Gujarat's Rajkot, Parshottam Rupala. Since Sikarwar is a Kshatriya, he is getting resonance from the community.

To save the seat, senior BJP leaders like Rajnath Singh, a prominent Thakur face, and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath are holding multiple rallies in Sikri and Agra to placate the Kshatriyas.

The BJP has also roped in retired Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhadoria, another Thakur from Bah who recently joined the party, to pacify the Thakurs. Bhadoria held a roadshow for the BJP candidate. Chahar is mainly relying on the Modi-Yogi factor to stay afloat.

As for the Congress, its leadership is trying to put in more effort to wrest the seat. Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi is scheduled to hold a roadshow in Fatehpur Sikri on Friday.

Besides, Sikarwar has his own following. He resides in the Kheragarh village, often stays in a village temple and travels in a four-wheeler. A Kargil war hero, he retired from the Army in 2004. His popularity, especially among the deprived sections, is giving Chahar more worries.

The BSP has fielded Ram Niwas Sharma, a Brahmin, making it a quadrangular contest. Sikri has 1.75 lakh Jats, 3.5 lakh Thakurs, 3 lakh Brahmins, 1.4 lakh Kushwahas, 1.25 lakh Nishads, and Muslims and Vaishyas at 1 lakh each.

Rajkumar Chahar — Ram Nath Sikarwar

ILLUSTRATION: MANDAR PARGAONKAR

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